

A new locality for the Snake-eyed skink, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, in Serbia

Novi nalaz ivanjskog rovaša, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, u Srbiji

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Abstract

In the summer of 1996, 10 km east of Čuprija town (43°57'38" N, 21°28'32" E; altitude 240m), near the monastery of Ravanica (central Serbia), a new locality was found for *Ablepharus kitaibelii*.

Key words: Snake-eyed skink, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, New locality, Serbia

Sažetak

U ljeto 1996, 10 km istočno od Čuprije (43°57'38" N, 21°28'32" E; n.v. 240m), blizu manastira Ravanica (centralna Srbija), pronađeno je novo nalazište ivanjskog rovaša *Ablepharus kitaibelii*.

Ključne riječi: ivanjski rovaš, *Ablepharus kitaibelii*, nova lokacija, Srbija

Serbia is the western edge of the distribution of *Ablepharus kitaibelii* (Pasuljević 1977). The highest frequency of records is found in Kosovo and Metohija, where there are more extensive populations and the distribution is continuous, in the remainder of Serbia, where the populations occur more sporadically, this species shows a discontinuous type of distribution (Pasuljević 1976).

The newly found population is located in the central/eastern part of Serbia, 10 km east of Čuprija town (43°57'38" N, 21°28'32" E; altitude 240m), near the monastery of Ravanica, next to

the road from Senje to Senjski Rudnik. *Ablepharus kitaibelii* was first found and identified on the 16.09.1996. The site was visited again on the 13.10.1996 when about twenty specimens were found, further visits were made on 11.05.2000 and 06.05.2012. Specimens of *Ablepharus* were hiding in the dense short grass vegetation and under rocks. At this site, as well as *Ablepharus*, *Podarcis muralis*, *Lacerta viridis*, *Vipera ammodytes* and *Coronella austriaca* were also found.

The site was artificially created after the completion of the quarrying, during the construction of the road from Senje to Senjski

Rudnik. Upon completion of the road construction works, quarries were abandoned and left to regenerate naturally. *Ablepharus* are likely to have colonised the quarry once the habitat became favourable. At several places along the road to Senjski Rudnik there are similar abandoned quarries, but *Ablepharus* was not found in these. The main reason for absence is the lack of vegetation with too much bare rock.

The habitat has the character of an ecotone and belongs to the biome of sub-Mediterranean forests with elements of oro-Mediterranean (mountainous) climate in the cliffs (Matvejev & Puncer 1989). In this small isolated habitat specific ecological conditions occur. The site has a greater degree of aridity due to the presence of very free draining calcareous (limestone) substrates, poor red soil, erosion that has engulfed the peripheral parts of the habitat and its southeastern section. Xerophilous conditions are partially reduced by the river Ravanica, with the left side of the gorge, which has a cold and wet northern exposure and is covered with forests of oak, elm and beech. All these factors contribute to the creation of special microclimatic conditions. Thus, the characteristics of the habitat are in accordance with the ecological preferences of the species (Pasuljević 1966, 1976).

The altitude of the site (240m) coincides with the vertical gradient of population distribution, which conforms to the increase in altitude for the particular habitat from north to south (Pasuljević 1965).

The nearest known site is from the vicinity of Paraćin (Džukić 1974). However, this data is quite old, and the current situation of this

population is unknown. It is possible that this population is no longer present, as was the case with some sites in FYR Macedonia (Pasuljević 1977).

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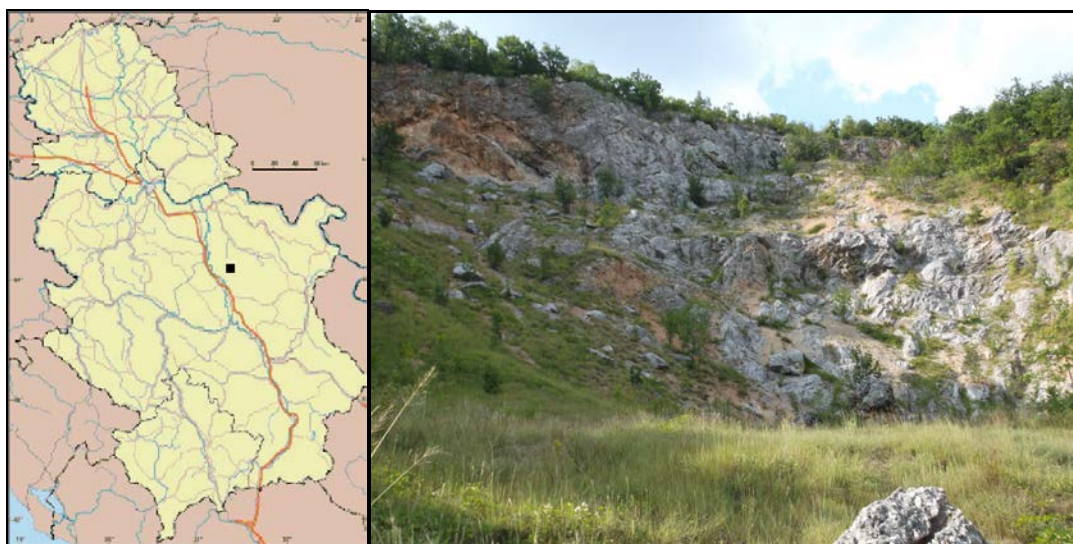


Figure 1. a) Location of a new site for *Ablepharus kitaibelii* in Serbia (black square), b) habitat type at this location.

Slika 1. a) Lokacija novog nalazišta vrste *Ablepharus kitaibelii* u Srbiji (crni kvadrat), b) tip staništa na nalazištu